

# SUPPORT BUILDING SAFETY!

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## Safety First

**Disaster Preparedness  
Tips for Your Home  
and Family**





## PREPARE YOUR HOME

**There are many ways you** can better prepare your house to withstand the effects of a natural disaster.

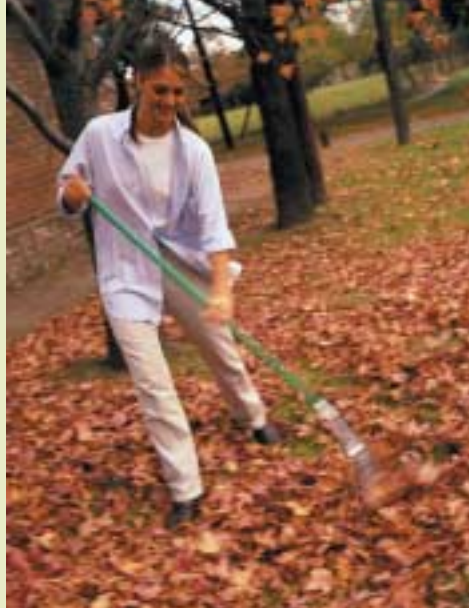
### Before a Hurricane

- ▶ If your house does not have permanent shutters, plan to protect your windows and glass doors with the low-cost alternative of plywood panels. Long before storm season approaches, cut 1/2-inch marine plywood to fit each window and glass door. Pre-drill holes every 18 inches for easy installation of screws. Store them where you can easily access them during an emergency. Clearly mark each panel so you can quickly determine which window it covers.
- ▶ The roof of your house is very vulnerable to hurricane winds. Reinforce the connection between the roof and walls with hurricane straps and bracing to resist a hurricane's uplift.
- ▶ Reinforce double-entry front doors, as well as garage doors.
- ▶ Clear away dead or weak tree branches that may break off and damage your house in high winds.

### Before a Flood

- ▶ Stock up on building materials such as: plywood, plastic sheeting, hammer, nails, saw, pry bar, shovels, and sandbags. In the case of an emergency, you will be better off already having these items on hand.
- ▶ Prevent electrical damage by raising the level of electrical components (fuse and circuit breaker boxes, meters, switches, and outlets). This can save you from the expense of replacing a flood-damaged system, and it will help prevent fires caused by short circuits. Remember that a licensed contractor should do this work.

**Teach every family member when and how to dial 9-1-1 for emergency assistance.**



- ▶ To protect your house from shallow flooding, add waterproof veneer to the exterior walls and seal all openings.

### Before An Earthquake

- ▶ Brace overhead light fixtures.
- ▶ Repair any defective electrical or gas connections.
- ▶ Secure your water heater by strapping it to wall studs or bolting it to the floor (this can prevent a possible gas leak and provide a convenient source of clean water after an earthquake).
- ▶ Repair cracks in foundations or ceilings.
- ▶ Bolt your house to its foundation.

### Before a Wildfire

- ▶ Install smoke detectors on every level of your house, in every bedroom, and in hallways leading to bedrooms.
- ▶ Use fire-resistant materials when building or renovating. Most importantly, use tile or flame-retardant shingles on your roof.
- ▶ Keep vegetation, yard debris, and any other combustible materials at least 30 feet away from your house.
- ▶ Plant trees away from your house at a distance greater than their mature height. If you do have trees close to your home, trim them to a height of 8 to 10 feet and keep them free of dead or dying wood.
- ▶ Use stone walls, swimming pools, or patios to create a shield safety zone between vegetation and your house.
- ▶ Avoid planting shrubs near your house. Instead, try alternatives like a fountain or rock garden.
- ▶ Clear rain gutters of dead limbs, needles, and other debris.

home



## PREPARE YOUR FAMILY

Although no one can prevent natural disasters from occurring, there are many things you can do to make the impact less devastating for your family.

**Every home should have 3 key elements in place before a disaster strikes:**

1. Evacuation Plan
2. Communication Plan
3. Emergency Supply Kit

### 1 Evacuation Plan

In the event of an emergency such as a flood, wildfire, tornado, or hurricane, you may be instructed to evacuate your house. Depending on the type of natural disaster, you may have to travel 20 to 50 miles to get your family to safety. Establish a “safety destination” (like a friend or relative’s house some distance away) and plan several different routes to get there so you can drive around roadblocks or hazards. Practice your plan and become familiar with each route so you will be better prepared.

You may need to turn off your gas, water and electricity before you evacuate. Each member of the house should learn when and how to do this.

### Know Your Neighbors

Find out if any of your neighbors will need extra help during an emergency. The elderly, disabled, and people with small children may need you to lend a helping hand.



### 2 Communication Plan

During an emergency it is usually easier to make long distance calls, so choose an out-of-state relative to be your family’s “communication center.” Be sure that each member of your family knows the name and phone number for this person in case you are separated. By having everyone call one central person, it will be easier for you to check on each other and reunite after a disaster.

### 3 Emergency Supply Kit

Whether you are preparing for an earthquake, tornado, hurricane, flood or wild fire, you will need the following basic items in your kit:

- ▶ battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- ▶ flashlight and extra batteries
- ▶ battery-operated lantern and extra batteries
- ▶ first aid kit and manual
- ▶ blankets
- ▶ canned food
- ▶ hand-operated can opener
- ▶ water (one gallon per person per day)
- ▶ durable shoes
- ▶ essential medications
- ▶ cash and credit cards
- ▶ basic tools (wrench, hammer)
- ▶ utility gloves

Place all items in a sturdy closed container outside your home where it can be easily located. Restock food and water twice a year.

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### **Pet Supply Kit**

An emergency kit for your furry friends should include:

- ▶ food and treats
- ▶ bowl
- ▶ name and phone number of your veterinarian
- ▶ toys
- ▶ bed or blanket just for them
- ▶ water
- ▶ medication and medical records
- ▶ leash
- ▶ recent photos in case your pet is lost

Remember that after a disaster, pets can be scared and may behave unusually. Keep a pet carrier close by in case you need to prevent your pet from escaping.

Enlist a neighbor to look after your pet in case you are not home when a disaster hits. Provide them with the name and phone number of your veterinarian, as well as a contact number for you.

